

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5583

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 5433

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, MASS, US, ET, SO

SUBJ: POST AND HENZE MEETING WITH ETHIOPIAN FONMIN

SUMMARY: AF/E DIRECTOR POST AND NSC STAFF MEMBER HENZE MEETING WITH ETHIOPIAN FONMIN FELLEKE GEDLE-GHIORGIS SEPT 10 GAVE BOTH SIDES USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO CLEAR AIR ON PAST GREIVANCES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND LOOK TO MORE STABLE, SOMEWHAT IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP IN FUTURE. FELLEKE STRESSED THAT EPMG DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN GENUINELY NON-ALIGNED STATUS, BUT NEEDED HELP OF COUNTRIES LIKE U.S. TO ASSURE NATIONAL UNITY AND HEALTHY ECONOMIC SOCIETY. FELLEKE ASKED U.S. TO USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH ARABS TO BRING ABOUT SUSPENSION OF FOREIGN ASSKS-
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TANCE WITH ERITREAN INSURGENCY. HE CLAIMED C-130 AIRCRAFT TRANSPORTING MILITARY SUPPLIES TO SOMALIA. FELLEKE ALSO ASKED VISITORS TO THINK ABOUT MENGISTU'S EARLIER REQUEST FOR US MILITARY SPARE PARTS AND EQUIPMENT PREVIOUSLY CONTRACTED FOR. POST AND HENZE EXPLAINED US DESIRE NOT TO BECOME INVOLVED MILITARILY ON EITHER SIDE OF OGADEN CONFLICT AND US PREPAREDNESS

TO HELP WORK OUT PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS IN BOTH OGADEN AND ERITREA. AGREEING THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS HAD FALLEN TOO LOW, THEY REAFFIRMED US INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO BENEFIT POOREST ELEMENTS OF ETHIOPIAN POPULATION. THEY ALSO PROPOSED RESUMPTION OF SOME CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND GREATER ETHIOPIAN PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT TO EXPLAIN AIMS OF REVOLUTION AS MEANS OF RESTORING BALANCE IN NONCONTROVERSIAL AREAS AND OF COUNTERACTING ETHIOPIA'S CURRENT NEGATIVE IMAGE IN US.

END SUMMARY.

1. MESSRS. POST AND HENZE EXPLAINED EXPLORATORY PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT TO FOUR HORN COUNTRIES AND SUMMARIZED CURRENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS HERE AS HAVING LEVELD OFF AT REDUCED SCALE. ALTHOUGH MILITARY RELATIONSHIP BROUGHT TO END BY ETHIOPIA'S ACTION, US LOOKED FORWARD TO PROCEEDING WITH NEW PROGRAMS IN AID AND ECONOMIC FIELDS AND WAS PLEASED BY RECENT NEW STARTS IN AID WHICH GAVE US CHANCE TO HELP ACHIEVE EPMG'S OWN GOALS OF HELPING COMMON PEOPLE ECONOMICALLY. US AIMS IN ETHIOPIA HAD NOT CHANGED. THEY REMAINED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PEACE AND STABILITY IN REGION, WORKING TOGETHER WITH AFRICANS, AND GUIDING OUR POLICY BY CONSENSUS OF THOSE MOST DIRECTLY CONCERNED, WITH OAU TAKING LEAD. US IN COMFORTABLE POSITION OF NOT BEING DIRECTLY INVOLVED ON EITHER SIDE OF OGADEN DISPUTE,

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WHEREAS SOVIETS NOW PRINCIPAL ARMS SUPPLIER TO BOTH. WHEN IN SOMALIA, POST AND HENZE SAID, THEY HAD TOLD GSDR THAT US WAS UNHAPPY OVER CURRENT OGADEN SITUATION, AND THAT IT DID NOT SUPPORT ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS BY MILITARY MEANS. THEY TOLD FELLEKE THAT SO LONG AS HOSTILITIES CONTINUED, THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF US ARMS DELIVERIES TO SOMALIA.

2. OUTLINING BRIEFLY NATURE OF ETHIOPIA'S SOCIAL GOALS AND ACKNOWLEDGING COUNTRY'S PAST DEBT TO US, DR. FELLEKE SAID ETHIOPIA BELIEVED ITS TRADITIONAL FRIENDS HAD NOT BEEN FAIR. DESPITE EPMG'S ALMOST COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON US FOR MILITARY AID, US HAD EMBARGOED GRANT AID FOR REASONS NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD. ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION ALSO MISINTERPRETED, AND IN ANY EVENT NOT COMPARABLE TO WIDESPREAD ABUSES UNDER EMPEROR, WHEN NOTHING CRITICAL HAD BEEN SAID ABROAD. ETHIOPIANS ALSO PERPLEXED BY US DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE DEFENSIVE ARMS TO SOMALIA. DEFENSE AGAINST WHOM? ETHIOPIA HAD NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS, WHEREAS SOMALIA FOR YEARS HAD WORKED SINGLEMINDEDLY TOWARD GOAL OF TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AT ETHIOPIA'S EXPENSE. MILITARY BALANCE WAS

HEAVILY TILTED IN SOMALIA'S FAVOR. ALSO TIMING OF US DECISION CAUSED CONCERN, COMING AS IT DID AFTER CUTTING OF DJIBOUTI RAILROAD, WHEN SOMALI EXPANSIONIST INTENTIONS WERE CLEAR AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF OGADEN HAD BEEN PARALYZED.

3. FELLEKE SAID EPMG WANTED GOOD, FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US. REVOLUTION WAS INWARD DIRECTED, NOT FOR EXPORT. EPMG LIKEWISE NOT PREPARED TO IMPORT COUNTER-REVOLUTION, DESPITE MANY COUNTRIES' INTEREST IN DISMEMBERING ETHIOPIA. IT SOUGHT STRONG, ECONOMICALLY SOUND SOCIETY, WHICH WOULD ENABLE IT TO MAINTAIN GENUINELY NONALIGNED STATUS, FAITHFUL TO OAU PRINCIPLES. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WHEN US INSTITUTIONS WERE ORDERED

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CLOSED LAST APRIL, THIS WAS IN LARGE PART BECAUSE THEY HAD BECOME REDUNDANT. ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP HAD BEEN LEFT UNTOUCHED. LIKEWISE, 50 PERCENT REDUCTION OF EMBASSY STAFF WAS NOT HOSTILE ACT BUT DESIGNED READJUST EMBASSY SIZE TO NEW LEVEL REACHED FOLLOWING CLOSING REDUNDANT ACTIVITIES. EPMG HAD BEEN RESPONSIVE TO US REQUESTS FOR MODIFICATION OF DECISION.

4. POST INDICATED THAT THESE EVENTS COULD BE VIEWED FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, BUT IT WAS NOT IMPORTANT NOT TO ARGUE OVER PAST, EXCEPT AS GUIDE FOR FUTURE IN DETERMINING KIND OF RELATIONSHIP TWO COUNTRIES WANTED. HENZE ADDED THAT RELATIONSHIP HAD PROBABLY FALLEN TOO LOW, BUT GIVEN FACT THAT REVOLUTION NOT WELL UNDERSTOOD BY AMERICAN PEOPLE, EPMG HELP WAS NEEDED TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN FUTURE AND RESTORE BALANCE. POST SUGGESTED MODEST START IN NONCONTROVERSIAL AREAS, SUCH AS IN CULTURAL FIELD, BY PERMITTING RESUMPTION OF SOME USIS ACTIVITIES.

5. FELLEKE, WHILE ALSO PROFESSING DESIRE TO MAINTAIN BALANCE IN EPMG RELATIONS, NOT TILTED TOO HEAVILY IN ANY ONE DIRECTION, DOUBTED WHETHER PRESENCE OF INSTITUTIONS DETERMINED TONE OF RELATIONS. IN ORDER TO STAY NONALIGNED AND ALSO TO PRESERVE NATIONAL UNITY, EPMG NEEDED US HELP. ETHIOPIA ASPIRED TO STATUS SIMILAR TO THAT OF YUGOSLAVIA. IT HAD NO DESIRE TO BE SATELLITE OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY. ITS SYSTEM MUST CONFORM TO ETHIOPIAN OBJECTIVE REALITY, IT WAS SEEKING ITS OWN IDENTITY. BLACK AFRICA HAD GIVEN ITS SUPPORT AT LIBREVILLE, BUT SOME COUNTRIES, NOTABLY TOGO, SOUGHT TO REVISE OAU CHARTER, AND OTHERS SOUGHT DISINTEGRATION OF AFRICA. AMONG THOSE WERE SYRIA, IRAQ, SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT AND

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SUDAN, WHICH, DESPITE RECENT FAVORABLY ARAB LEAGUE DECISION, SEEMED FULLY COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING SOMALIA IN

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AID-05 IGA-02 COME-00 MCE-00 ACDA-07 DHA-05 /120 W
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HER AGGRESSIVE DESIGNS. ETHIOPIA WAS ALSO CONCERNED OVER FACT THAT AMERICAN-MADE C-130 AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN OBSERVED TRANSPORTING EQUIPMENT TO AND WITHIN SOMALIA, ALTHOUGH EPMG WAS AWARE THAT US WAS COUNSELLING AGAINST THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS OF US-ORIGIN ARMS.

6. HENZE ASKED FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE C-130'S, WHICH COULD BE FOLLOWED UP IN WASHINGTON. POST CONFIRMED THAT US HAD REMINDED SEVERAL OF COUNTRIES MENTIONED THAT TRANSFERS OF US-ORIGIN MILITARY EQUIPMENT WAS NOT PERMITTED. US HAD GIVEN PERMISSION TO NO ONE. ONLY CASE HE KNEW OF UNAUTHORIZED TRANSFER INVOLVED

YUGOSLAF SUPPLY OF TANKS TO ETHIOPIA, WHICH HAD CREATED
TROUBLE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA. (FELLEKE
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DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE.) WE DID NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED
IN OGADEN. AT SAME TIME US SADDENED BY HUMAN SUFFERING
ON BOTH SIDES AND WAS PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY STEPS
EPMG MIGHT PROPOSE FOR US HELP TO ALLEVIATE IT.

7. FELLEKE RECOUNTED EARLIER EPMG PROPOSALS TO FORM
CONFEDERATION WITH SOMALIA AND FOR JOINT ECONOMIC DE-
VELOPMENT, BOTH OF WHICH HAD BEEN REJECTED, SO LONG AS
OGADEN REMAINED WITHIN ETHIOPIAN BOUNDARIES. UNDER SUCH
CIRCUMSTANCES, ANY SUPPORT TO SOMALIA, DEFENSIVE OR
OTHERWISE, HELPED SOMALIS FURTHER THEIR TERRITORIAL AMB-
ITIONS. AT SAME TIME US RELUCTANCE TO BE FULLY RESPON-
SIVE TO EPMG ARMS REQUESTS TO MEET SOMALI THREAT,
FOOTDRAGGING, LEADTIME DELAYS, AND FINALLY INSERTION OF
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE HAD LED TO SERIOUS DISTORTION OF
MILITARY BALANCE AND INVITED AGGRESSION. POST SAID US
COULD PLEAD GUILTY TO EFFICIENCY PROBLEMS AND NOT PRO-
VIDING EVERYTHING REQUESTED, BUT NOT TO MALEVOLENT IN-
TENTIONS. ON OTHER HAND, PROVISIONS OF READILY TRANS-
PORTABLE WEAPONS TO SOMALIA BY SOVIETS HAD SERVED TO
STIMULATE AGGRESSION IN MUCH GREATER DEGREE. HENZE
NOTED THAT SOVIETS WERE NOT STUPIED, FULLY UNDERSTOOD
SOMALI INTENTIONS, AND HAD NEVERTHELESS CONTINUED TO
GIVE MORE AND MORE ARMS. POST WONDERED WHETHER SOMALIS
WOULD HAVE LAUNCHED AGGRESSION AT ALL IF US PRESENCE
HAD NOT BEEN EXPELLED FROM ETHIOPIA, LEAVING OPPORTU-
NITY THAT MIGHT NEVER AGAIN BE AVAILABLE TO SOMALIS.
EVEN SO, LATEST BATTLE REPORTS SHOWED ETHIOPIA DOING
RATHER WELL, WITH ARMS SUPPLIED BY US. HENZE COMPLI-
MENTED EPMG FOR REFUSING TO BE PROVOKED INTO RETALIA-
TIONS AGAINST SOMALI TERRITORY, WHICH PUT ETHIOPIA IN
STRONG INTERNATIONAL POSITION. FELLEKE SUGGESTED THAT
SOME OF CURRENT SUFFERING MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED IF
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US HAD PRESERVED MILITARY BALANCE. MOREOVER, EVEN IN
PRESENT CONTEXT, IF US GOAL WAS TO PROMOTE PEACE, ONLY
STRENGTHENING ETHIOPIA MADE SENSE, NOT AID TO SOMALIA,
SINCE FORMER HAD NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS AGAINST ITS
NEIGHBORS.

8. TURNING TO ERITREA, FELLEKE SOUGHT US ASSISTANCE IN

EXERTING PRESSURE ON ITS ARAB FRIENDS TO SUSPEND THEIR INTERVENTION INTO WHAT WAS ETHIOPIAN PRIVATE AFFAIR. EPMG HAD PROPOSED FEDERATION. WITHOUT SIDE INTER-FERENCE, HE THOUGHT SOLUTION WOULD HAVE BEEN FOUND BY NOW. EVEN NIMEIRI, TO WHOM EPMG HAD ONCE TURNED FOR HELP, NOW OPENLY SUPPORTED SECESSION AND TALKED OF MOBILIZING 100,000 ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES. DREAMING OF ARAB EXPANSION AND ARAB LAKE, ARABS WANTED YET ANOTHER ARAB STATE UNDER THEIR CONTROL, CARVED OUT OF ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY. HENZE SAID US HAD NEVER FAVORED EITHER ERITREAN SECESSION OR FOREIGN INTERVENTION. US WOULD ENCOURAGE ANY ETHIOPIAN INITIATIVE THROUGH SUDAN TO ACHIEVE PEACEFUL SOLUTION, AND HE AND POST WOULD SOON BE TALKING IN KHARTOUM TO THAT EFFECT.

9. ASKED WHETHER VISITORS HAD COME WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR EPMG CONSIDERATION, HENZE ASSURED FELLEKE THAT US PREPARED TO SUPPORT EPMG IN WORKING OUT SOLUTIONS IN OGADEN AND ERITREA. POST ADDED THAT US SADDENED BY LAST SPRING'S TURN OF EVENTS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND WANTED TO IMPROVE THEM. FELLEKE CLOSED BY POSING TWO QUESTIONS FOR VISITORS TO THINK ABOUT. FIRST, WAS THERE ANY ANSWER TO PMAC CHAIRMAN'S REQUEST FOR DELIVERY OF ARMS AND SPARE PARTS FOR WHICH CONTRACTS HAD BEEN SIGNED IN PAST? SECOND, WHAT COULD BE DONE TO ASSURE THAT MEDIA IN US WOULD BE MORE FAIR IN PAINTING TRUE PICTURE OF REVOLUTION? POST AND HENZE ENCOURAGED EPMG TO TAKE MORE LIBERAL POLICY IN ALLOWING US JOURNALISTS COME TO ETHIOPIA AND TO DEVELOP ITS OWN PUBLIC RELATIONS IN US

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BY ASSIGNING STRONG STAFF TO ASSIST NEW ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, AFTER HE WAS APPOINTED. QUESTION OF SPARE PARTS AND ARMS WAS NOTED WITH REMARK THAT ANSWER WOULD BE SOUGHT.

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